

Veron Obenotell

1841



UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ADELAIDE,
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT,
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE,
AND HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER,
&c.

R E P O R T

OF THE

VERRAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY

FOR THE

TREATMENT AND ATTENDANCE AT THEIR OWN HOMES

OF

POOR PERSONS

AFFLICTED WITH DISEASES AND DISTORTIONS

OF THE

SPINE, CHEST, HIPS,

&c.

84, NORTON STREET, GREAT PORTLAND ROAD.

Established July 1, 1836.

The Asylum of the Society is in the Great Portland Road, Regent's Park, opposite Weymouth Street, Portland Place; to which Establishment the Offices have been removed from Howland Street.

The Office entrance is 84, Norton Street, where the Medical Officers may be consulted gratuitously on Tuesdays and Saturdays, between the hours of 11 & 1.

LONDON :

T. HOULSTON, 154, STRAND.

1844.

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APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.

“THE SOCIETY FOR THE TREATMENT, and attendance at their own Homes, of POOR PERSONS AFFLICTED WITH DISEASES AND DISTORTIONS OF THE SPINE, CHEST, HIPS, &c.” has, since the commencement of its charitable labours, increased in its beneficial effects to a degree scarcely to have been calculated upon by its original Foundress. In the generality of cases the patients have been amongst the number of the most diseased, helpless, and destitute of human beings, and living in squalid habitations of misery and want. Many of them having received relief from their sufferings, and been restored to shape and health, have been thereby enabled to resume or commence the means of supporting themselves.

It was in consequence of observing the great number of deformed objects amongst the Poor, during a residence in London, that this Society was projected; for it is remarkable, and may seem surprising, that in this immense metropolis, celebrated as it is for the number and variety of its charitable institutions, there did not exist, previous to the formation of this Society, a single association or public institution, having for its object the treatment of the DEFORMED POOR. Whilst wretchedness and illness of almost every other description had found its appropriate Asylum, or had been offered the means of cure, distortions of the Spine, of the Chest, and of the Hips, with all their concomitant and most formidable evils, had hitherto met with no public sympathy, and had certainly never been afforded any distinct public help. There are cases to which no Hospitals or Infirmaries can give *effectual assistance*. In the first place, cases of mere distortion they will not admit at all; — cases of actual disease, either of the spine or the hips, they occasionally receive; but they do not, and they cannot, retain them long enough to afford them a fair chance of cure. Numerous as the cases are, and tedious in their progress of cure, were they to be retained till that should be effected, they would be the means of excluding all those more active cases for which a general Hospital is so eminently required. Many indeed who have been suffering under spinal and similar complaints, and been received into the Hospitals for the usually allowed period, and then discharged without cure, have afterwards had that object effected under the treatment and care of this Society.

To offer assistance and relief to the many unfortunate sufferers from diseases of this nature, and, under Providence, to afford them the means of perfect cure, the Society now requesting the attention and support of the Public, was founded (in 1836) by Mrs. Henry Ogle, of East Bourne; and her exertions in this charitable cause were seconded by several humane individuals, who had, like herself, witnessed the ease, advantage, and extensive application of a mode of treatment successfully practised by Dr. Verral in the south parts of the county of Sussex, and at that time recently introduced by him in London to the knowledge of the public. It was not long after his establishment in London, that Mrs. Henry Ogle having mentioned to Dr. Verral the plan she proposed for forming the Charity in question, he at once most benevolently offered his *gratuitous professional assistance*; thereby enabling her to put it into immediate execution, with even the few subscriptions at that time collected by her towards the payment of the cost of medicines and other needful expenses. The distinguished patronage with which this undertaking has since been honoured, and the recommendation which the efficacy of Dr. Verral's system carries with it, wherever it becomes known, have spread the benefits of the Charity not only in the two metropolitan counties, but also (through the compassionate and indefatigable zeal of Dr. Verral) in various other parts of the kingdom, as in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Cornwall, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire; *in all of which counties*, Dr. Verral having to attend on private patients for spinal and similar complaints, many crippled and diseased poor in the neighbourhood of those patients were also attended by him, and partook of the benefit of his peculiar and successful system of treatment.

The utility of Dr. Verral's system of treatment depends in a great degree upon the employment of the Prone, as opposed to the Supine Position, the former possessing over the latter the following important advantages. The Prone Position, more than any other, facilitates the restoration of the distorted parts to their natural and healthy forms, whilst it affords to the parts diseased the most perfect and undisturbed repose. It offers to the Surgeon the readiest means of applying his various local remedies; it gives to the sick and suffering patients many advantages, especially to those who would otherwise be wearied, and frequently become wrung and excoriated by long confinement in their beds. It facilitates their moving, for the requisite changes of position and linen, with the greatest possible ease (and even comfort) to themselves and their attendants; and it allows them to employ themselves in sewing, knitting, writing, drawing, or reading, and many other profitable or agreeable occupations; and it greatly contributes to the restoration of health, most particularly by facilitating, as it invariably does, the important processes of digestion. The late Mr. Abernethy, to whom, as an old and valued friend, Dr. Verral communicated the progress and success which attended the first case (an exceedingly distressing one, much aggravated by three abscesses), for whose relief the Prone Position, and *the first rough model of the prone couches now in use, was attempted and planned*, was much struck with the merits of this

novel mode of treatment, and expressed his decided approbation of it, in a letter to Dr. Verral, which it may be here well to introduce.

“ Bedford Row, 19th February, 1824.

“ MY DEAR SIR—I have no doubt but that if you can keep a patient with a diseased Vertebral Column perfectly still in an horizontal position, yet *by means that allow, without any motion to the diseased parts, those variations of position which divers necessities require*, that a marvellous degree of good will be done in many cases ; nor should I despair of the event, if the diet and bowels were regulated according to terms which you are acquainted with.—Should I know of any patient going on the errand you mention, I will certainly tell them of what you have done, and what I believe you capable of doing. Any services I can do you, you may at all times command, and I remain, dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

JOHN ABERNETHY.”

“ To Charles Verral, Esq., Surgeon,
Seaford, Sussex.” (Copy.)

It would far exceed the necessarily prescribed limits of this Appeal to attempt a detail of many of the numerous cases of disease and distortion which, under Dr. Verral’s system, have been successfully treated, before and since the establishment of the Society ; but a few of them will be subjoined, for the information of those who may not have seen the fuller detail of them contained in the last Report of the Society, published in 1841 ; and more will be communicated to the Subscribers in the next Report. The history of many of the cases will be found to possess an absorbing interest to persons who know of sufferers under similar complaints.

The success which has hitherto attended the labours of the Society proves, that nothing but an increase of pecuniary means is wanting to enable it still further to extend its usefulness. Already more than Five Hundred patients have been on its lists : but so great is the number of afflicted creatures who are constantly applying to its Medical Officers for admission, that the present yearly subscriptions and donations are quite inadequate to the demands thus made upon its funds. And it not unfrequently happens that the painful alternative alone remains, of either absolutely rejecting the application of the unhappy sufferer, or postponing assistance until a subscription can be obtained to cover the immediate expense of a course of such medicines as may be requisite. Many more, indeed, than the Public can have any idea of, are the crooked, lame, and diseased objects, to whom admittance to the benefits of this Charity is necessarily refused, from want of funds to provide the means of giving them relief.

Nor has this been the only subject of anxious regret to the well-wishers of the Charity. There are many cases of suffering and disease that urgently demand from the Surgeons a more frequent and regular attendance than can possibly be given to the patients at their frequently distant homes. There are many, very many, instances of such utter destitution, that the means cannot be found of supporting the poor sufferers through their lingering and wasting diseases. There are also many cases of terrible lateral distortions of the spine, which, requiring a peculiar treatment, and the most unremitting attention, it has been found almost in vain to attempt to cure at *their own homes*. An Asylum or Infirmary, therefore, combining the advantage of constant professional superintendence, with a healthy air and nutritious diet, was found to be

indispensable, as the only haven in which these poor creatures could find rest, or hope for benefit; and the present state of the Funds of the Charity rendering it impossible to support such an establishment for the gratuitous reception of patients, it has been deemed advisable to open an Institution, in a healthy and airy situation, in the Great Portland Road, Regent's Park, into which patients are received, *on payment of a small weekly sum*, barely sufficient to cover the expenses of the board, washing, and attendants, and where not only all requisite medical attentions are paid to the afflicted Poor, but such instruction is also afforded them as may be suited to their stations in life.

There are various ways in which the small weekly sum thus required may be raised, when the resources of the Patients or their Friends are inadequate for the purpose. In many instances, the expense has been either wholly or in part borne by the Parish authorities to which the Patient belongs, who have found such an application of their funds exceedingly advantageous, in consequence of its enabling those who would otherwise have been a permanent burden on them, to become useful members of society, and to obtain their living in respectability and comfort. Others have been enabled to partake of the benefits of the Institution by the benevolence of charitable Ladies, or persons who have witnessed the success which has on other occasions attended the Society's labours. And it should ever be borne in mind, that a few humane individuals have it always in their power, *by a very small weekly contribution amongst themselves*, to rescue from hopeless misery many a decrepid child in their neighbourhood; and, by placing them in the Asylum of the Society, not only to ensure for them the utmost benefit which their cases admit of, but also, during their cure, those comforts, and that instruction, so essential to their present and future well-doing.

It is, in consequence, most earnestly entreated of all those who have already had the kindness to contribute to the Funds of this Society, not only to continue their own Subscriptions, *but to spread the knowledge of its existence wherever their influence may extend*, and in particular to point out to charitable persons the great good that will be effected by assisting in the permanent establishment of this Asylum, which, while the Society's original purpose of *attending the Poor at their own homes* is still steadily and actively pursued, will, it is hoped, be the means of granting still more effectual assistance to some of the most distressing cases of Disease and Malformation.

The anxious Appeal here made to the sympathy of the Public for their further support and assistance, is prompted by a thorough and confirmed conviction of the exceeding importance and usefulness of the Charity, and a deep commiseration of the forlorn condition of those among the suffering Poor who, owing to the present inadequacy of its Funds, are precluded from a participation of its benefits.

The Society has recently sustained a severe loss, in the death of the talented and humane Person to whose unremitting and *gratuitous exertions*, for the last seven years, so much of its success is to be attributed.

DR. VERRAL, after an illness of many weeks, died on the 20th of February, 1843, most sincerely regretted by all who had benefited by his professional skill, as well as by those relatives and friends who more intimately knew the kindness of his Heart and the excellence of his Character.

It will, however, be very satisfactory to the well-wishers of the Charity to be informed, that, at the request of its Foundress, and in accordance with a wish also expressed to her by Dr. Verral, in his last illness, Mr. Coles, a gentleman for many years known to them both, of long standing in the medical profession, well acquainted with and now exclusively practising the late Doctor's peculiar system of treatment in Spinal cases, has undertaken to fill the vacancy occasioned by his decease. It was also the expressed wish of Dr. Verral, and in which the Foundress most willingly concurred, that another medical friend of his, Mr. Hugman, who had assisted him in his official duty for a considerable time previous to his illness and death, and most entirely to his satisfaction, should continue to give his services to the Charity, acting therein in conjunction with Mr. Coles. Both these gentlemen have in consequence, since the death of Dr. Verral, given their constant and *gratuitous attention* to the Poor Objects applying for relief, and are the present Medical Officers of the Society.

As a tribute of respect to Dr. Verral, and to preserve the remembrance of him by whose skilful invention in the mode of treating Spinal Complaints, the Society is enabled to give effectual relief to great numbers of afflicted Poor, and whose humane attention to their sufferings, while it was yet in his power, used to bring consolation and ease into the miserable dwellings which he so indefatigably visited, this Charity will in future, by the wish of its Foundress and principal Supporters, be designated

“THE VERRAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY,

FOR THE TREATMENT AND ATTENDANCE AT THEIR OWN HOMES OF POOR PERSONS

AFFLICTED WITH

DISEASES AND DISTORTIONS OF THE SPINE, CHEST, HIPS, &c.”

The Medical Officers of the SOCIETY may be consulted, gratuitously, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, between the hours of Eleven and One o'clock, at the Offices, No. 84, NORTON STREET. The Asylum of the SOCIETY is in the GREAT PORTLAND ROAD, REGENT'S PARK, opposite Weymouth Street, Portland Place.

Donations and Annual Subscriptions received by Messrs. HANBURYS, TAYLOR, and LLOYD, Bankers, 60, Lombard Street; by Mr. HOULSTON, Bookseller, 154, Strand, who is Agent to the Society; by Mrs. HENRY OGLE, East Bourne, Sussex, Treasurer; by the Medical Officers; and by the Collector, Mr. WM. BUDD, 34, Windmill Street, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

 *Those Friends of the Charity who wish to obtain the Report for the purposes of distribution, can be supplied GRATIS, on application at the Society's Office, 84, Norton Street, Portland Road, or at Mr. HOULSTON's, 154, Strand.*

REGULATIONS

RESPECTING THE ADMISSION OF POOR PATIENTS TO THE BENEFIT OF BEING ATTENDED AT THEIR HOMES.

SUBSCRIBERS of One Guinea *annually* will be entitled to nominate a Patient, and to renew the nomination every succeeding year, provided the former Patient shall have been discharged.

Subscribers of *Two or more Guineas annually* will be entitled to nominate Patients in the same proportion.

Donators of Two Guineas will be entitled to nominate a Patient.

Donators of Five Guineas will be entitled to nominate Three Patients.

When Patients nominated reside at some considerable distance from London, it is absolutely necessary that an addition should be made to the Guinea subscription, towards the expenses of occasional visits.

It is expected that the persons nominated by the Subscribers shall be in such circumstances *as to render them proper objects of benevolence, in consequence of their being unable to defray the expenses for themselves.* On the part of the Patients or their friends, it is expected that all couches, mattresses, &c., shall be returned to the Rooms of the Society as soon as they may be done with.

Candidates for admission to THE ASYLUM* must obtain the *nomination of a SUBSCRIBER TO THE SOCIETY*, and the weekly charge for board, &c. must be paid in advance.

A Report of the Transactions of the Society will be presented to every Patron and Subscriber.

Such further regulations will be made from time to time, relative to the future management of the Charity, as circumstances may require.

* The Rules and Regulations to be observed in the Asylum, which are suspended in each Ward of the Establishment, for the guidance of its inmates and their friends, will be found at Page 30 of this Report.

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R E P O R T

OF THE

M E D I C A L O F F I C E R S.

ALTHOUGH the medical officers of the Society are not called upon to furnish on the present occasion a lengthened Professional Report, they are unwilling to omit the opportunity of laying before the Patrons and Friends of the excellent Institution to which they are attached, a short statement of their proceedings during the past year, as well for the purpose of showing the continued benefits which are resulting from the efforts of the Society, as of satisfying those who have hitherto so liberally supported it, that the lamented death of the late Dr. VERRAL has occasioned no diminution of either the zeal or success which is so well known to have attended that gentleman's indefatigable exertions. From their rapidly increasing list of patients, the medical officers are enabled to furnish some very interesting and valuable cases; and it is only in consequence of their limited space in this Appeal, and in order to admit of some important and more lengthened extracts from the last Report furnished by Dr. Verral himself, that they report so few. The Case Books of the Society contain numerous examples of that most formidable, as well as most common form of Spinal Disease, as it prevails amongst the poorer classes, Posterior Curvature; and from these it has been thought most advisable to select:—by no means, however, does this imply a less satisfactory result in the treatment of the other forms of Distortion.

Edward Aldridge, aged three years, residing at No. 33, Union Street, Middlesex Hospital, was admitted a patient of the Society on the 26th January, 1843, with a very considerable posterior curvature of the spinal column, at its junction with the neck. The head was drawn backwards to such a degree, as to bring the occiput into contact with the projection of the spine, and in this position it was rigidly fixed. The countenance of the child was expressive of the greatest distress, and there existed a considerable degree of mental imbecility; to use the language of his mother, "he was fast losing his senses;" all the lower part of the body was completely paralysed, and devoid of sensibility, the natural evacuations were passed involuntarily, and the child was unable to stand, or to move the lower extremities. In this deplorable condition, the little sufferer was placed upon the prone couch, and otherwise treated according to the system pursued by the medical officers of the Society, and he is now, September 19th, so far recovered as to be able to walk, and even to run about. He has long since had complete control over his evacuations, and has entirely recovered his intellectual faculties, being at the present time, a peculiarly intelligent child. His head is almost entirely released from its fixed and backward position, the posterior curve has disappeared, and a very few weeks further continuance of the system will enable him to be discharged perfectly cured.

Charles Guild, aged eight years, the son of a cabinet-maker in Henrietta Street, Brunswick Square, was admitted a patient in August, 1842. Twelve months previous, he was attacked with a general weakness and debility, with loss of appetite, &c., which, being supposed to depend on disordered liver, he was treated for that disease by a

medical gentleman residing in that neighbourhood. After some time had elapsed, without relief of these symptoms, it was discovered that the spinal column was diseased ; there was a continued sensation of burning pain throughout its whole length, and a projection was detected in its upper part, above the shoulders. Dr. H—— L—— being at this time consulted, had recourse to severe stimulating applications, followed by caustic issues, with rest, in the supine position. In the course of two months after, the arms became powerless and devoid of sensibility, which, after continuing for some time, partially returned, and was succeeded by general paralysis of the lower extremities. This state was quickly followed by imbecility so complete, that the child could scarcely be made to recognise his parents ; and thus becoming gradually worse, and apparently unable to bear the severity of the treatment he was undergoing, *he was brought to the office of the Society for advice.* His appearance at this period was extremely distressing. The paralysis and loss of sensation in the lower half of the body was complete, all the excretions were passed involuntarily, and the nervous debility and mental prostration was so great, that the most trifling noise occasioned violent agitations and alarm, which required a long time to allay. The curvature of the spine was considerable, and, as in the last case, the back of the head was fixed in contact with it. His sufferings were aggravated by a corresponding deformity of the chest, which was protruded forwards, and so compressed at the sides, as to impede the action of the heart and lungs, and to occasion incessant and most distressing palpitation and shortness of breath. His emaciation and general debility was extreme, and, in short, the physician who had attended him had pronounced his case to be hopeless, and had prognosticated his speedy dissolution. He was placed on the prone couch, and other appropriate means were adopted, to relieve the more urgent symptoms. It soon became apparent to the child's parents that a gradual alleviation of his sufferings was taking place. It would be tedious to describe the progress of the case through all the different stages of amendment, which were the result of a steady perseverance in the system adopted. He is at present entirely restored to the use of his limbs, the result of which has been for some months the cause of considerable difficulty in keeping him on the couch. The entire command over his evacuations is returned. He has grown stout and healthy. The prominence of the chest has disappeared, together with the palpitation and difficulty of breathing, and a comparatively slight projection of the spine is all that now remains of his once formidable state of disease and suffering. This is gradually disappearing, and if he continues the plan of treatment adopted, for a few months longer, a perfect cure will be the result.

William Wall, 17, Castle Street East, Oxford Market, aged nine years, was admitted a patient, October 9th, 1841, with disease of the lower cervical and upper dorsal vertebrae ; there was great tenderness of three or four bones, considerable narrowing and projection of the chest, accompanied with pain, especially on first waking in the morning, and he suffered much from difficulty of breathing. He had been in the Middlesex Hospital for five weeks, about two months previous to his becoming a patient of the Society, and from whence he had been dismissed as incurable ; since then, he had been seen by Dr. C——, who sent him to Dr. Verral. Such was this boy's case when he first came under treatment ; and there is little doubt, that had he steadily pursued the system adopted by Dr. Verral, he would have escaped the additional suffering which the following extract from the Society's Case Book records :—

" May 14th, 1842. William Wall has attended little to directions or to his couch, " but has continued to run about until at length paralysis has come on in the legs, and " he is now unable to walk or stand, though there is a slight power of moving the feet, " &c. ; the curvature is not increased. He complains of pain in the right side, and " there seems to be a slight fulness, but as yet no positive indication of abscess. A " week or two ago a gentleman gave the mother an order for the North London " Hospital ; but on taking him there, they said they could not do any thing for him, " and he was therefore taken home again, &c."

Since that time a more careful attention was paid to the directions of the surgeons of the Society, and the boy was confined strictly to the system of treatment and the couch, &c. The result is such as was to be anticipated, — *he has been discharged sufficiently restored to be able to take a place of work.*

Catherine Mcasam, 66, High Street, Whitechapel, had been suffering from disease of the vertebrae four months, and attending at Guy's Hospital as an out-patient, where she had been ordered a lotion and some medicine, without relief. When admitted a

patient of the Society, she had caries of the bones, and a considerable angular projection, with the usual accompaniment of paralysis of the lower half of the body, together with great pain in the neck. When first turned in bed in the morning, she was obliged to hold her head with both hands on attempting the least motion. Under the usual course of treatment she has perfectly recovered ; and it is most pleasing to be able to record the extreme gratitude felt and expressed by this child's parents towards the charitable lady by whose nomination the case came under treatment, as well as towards the Society's officers for the event of their exertions in her behalf.

Numerous cases of various descriptions are at present under treatment, with every prospect of a most favourable termination ; the following are particularly interesting :—

John Mathew, 33, Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, aged six years, a delicate child, was admitted a patient, March 15th, 1843, on the nomination of the QUEEN DOWAGER. Seven months before his admission, he first complained of a dull pain in the middle of the back extending down the legs, his breathing became short and hurried, and his general health much impaired ; he was soon tired on the least exertion, his appetite failed, and he was restless and feverish. After about four months from the commencement of these symptoms, the spine was observed by his parents to project slightly at the painful spot ; his health now rapidly declined, and he gradually lost the power of motion in the lower extremities. In three weeks from the time, the projection became considerable, involving four or five of the last dorsal and upper lumbar vertebrae. He complained at this time also of a constant pain in the right knee, and great tenderness over the whole lumbar region. He was as quickly as possible put under the plan of treatment, and placed on a prone couch ; but considerable delay in pursuing it was caused by an attack of influenza with which he was seized : he however remained on the couch nearly the whole of the day ; and after a few weeks the usual methods, adopted with so much success in other cases, were commenced, and up to the present time have been steadily pursued. He has perfectly recovered the use of his limbs ; and when last visited, September 20th, he was able to get off his couch to show "how well he could walk." The pain on pressure over the projecting spine is entirely removed, and the projection itself greatly diminished. Of the result of this case, under Providence, there can be no doubt, and equally satisfactory is the progress towards recovery in those of John Wood, No. 10, Camera Street, Chelsea ; of Louisa Price, No. 2, Shouldham Street, Bryanston Square ; of William Perriam, No. 4, Rebecca Court, Wells Street, Oxford Street ; of William Allenson, No. 12, Little Barlow Street, and others.

George Andrews, 9, Church Street, Shoreditch, aged $11\frac{1}{2}$, was a healthy child before the age of nine months, when he began to stoop as he was carried ; and about this time he had a fall. He suffered much whilst cutting his teeth, and did not walk until five years old. Three years ago the chest became distorted, and he felt a weakness in the back : during the last year he had suffered from epileptic fits, which sometimes lasted a whole day ; and about three months before he was admitted a patient he entirely lost his sight. He was placed on the prone couch three months ago, when otherwise commenced the system pursued by the medical officers of the Society. He has recovered his sight sufficiently to be able to read, has lost nearly all pain in the back, and a dorsal curvature is very considerably lessened. The epileptic fits have left him, and his chest is daily improving ;—he is altogether in a fair way of recovery.

There are numerous successful cases of lateral and other curvatures and diseases of the spine scattered through the Society's books, as also of distortions of the chest, and diseases of the hip joint, both with and without curvature and abscess. Of the latter, some valuable and extraordinary cases are to be found in the last Report ; and to illustrate the advantages of the system pursued by the medical officers of the Society, the following cases are recorded :—

William Biddens, in the village of Westham, Essex, was a Society patient, recommended by Mrs. Edward Buxton, who, with her mother, Mrs. Samuel Gurney, benevolently contributed to his support during the tedious progress of his distressful and most dangerous maladies : he had disease both of the spine and hip, with abscess that threatened to destroy his life. He lay, indeed, for many months on his couch, suffering very considerably, incapable of moving, and apparently on the brink of the grave. The hip joint was dislocated from the effects of disease. His abscesses, both in the groin

and thigh were discharging at first profusely; but from his position on the couch the limb was preserved in its natural situation, and the discharge gradually lessened. He eventually recovered, with very little distortion of the spine, and with a straight though with a somewhat shortened limb. At the next door resided a poor lad, who had been treated according to the old method, and who had up to this time been lying on his back. The thigh was bent, and thrown off at a right angle, resting flat on the bed beside him. Several abscesses were discharging profusely from the groin and thigh, and these, from the position in which he lay, continued to discharge until the powers of life were exhausted. This child eventually died, and was thus removed from a state of hopeless suffering and deformity.

Several cases of hip-joint disease now under treatment are progressing towards a cure most favourably. Those of Mary Ann Dix,* of Prinee's Row, Pimlico, and Elizabeth Swain,* of Eaton Lane, amongst others; but it is in general a subject of deep regret that in these cases the proper measures *are not resorted to sufficiently early to prevent the inevitable consequences of delay, the shortening of the limb from destruction of the joint*, so that the most successful treatment can only produce a somewhat partial cure. The following case will illustrate the happy result of a timely recourse to this Society for aid from this direful malady. Mary Anne Frampton, the child of poor parents living at No. 6, Fitzroy Court, Tottenham Court Road, was admitted a patient on the 17th of January, 1843. Nine weeks previous she had complained of severe and constant pain in her left knee, and when standing the limb was observed to bend upwards, and towards the right side. There was also occasional pain in the hip joint. These symptoms rapidly increased, and when at the above date she applied for admission, she was suffering severely under all the symptoms of confirmed hip-joint disease. The lameness had considerably increased, as well as the pain in the knee and hip; the limb was so much contracted that the foot could not be made to touch the ground. The hip joint was frightfully swollen, and the shaft of the thigh-bone, on being pressed upwards, increased severely the deep-seated pain in the joint: her health was also greatly impaired from the loss of rest occasioned by her sufferings. By means of suitable measures, used according to the late Dr. Verral's system of treatment, and the prone couch, upon which she rested six hours daily, and was gradually brought to remain entirely upon it, the medical officers of this Society had the satisfaction of discharging her *perfectly cured* on the 25th July, 1843.

The Medical Officers, in closing this short Report, whilst they congratulate the SOCIETY on the success of its exertions in the cause of suffering humanity, cannot avoid expressing their fervent hope that an increase of means will shortly enable them to extend the blessings of health and happiness to numbers of wretched objects by whom they are at present in vain appealed to, and whose cases, for want of funds, they are daily obliged to reject, or to postpone their admission.

JAMES COLES,
25, Harley Street, Cavendish Square.

WILLIAM C. HUGMAN,
23, New North Street, Queen's Square,
Bloomsbury.

* Both these patients have been discharged perfectly cured since this Report was sent to the press.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
LAST REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICERS.

THE amount of good which the Society has been enabled to effect must not be measured by the few extraordinary cases for which, in the limited pages of this appeal, we shall be enabled to find room. A very great number of the simpler forms of distortion and disease we must necessarily pass over without notice, and if we briefly mention one or two of these it will only be to show the kind of cases with which we so frequently have to grapple, and to so many of which we have been the happy means of affording such effectual relief.

Catherine Matilda Ferriman, aged nine years, August 23, 1838. She had disease and considerable distortion of the lower dorsal vertebræ, with much pain, and tenderness upon pressure. Had a fall about four years ago, and from that time complained of weakness in the back, and in a few months a slight protrusion of one or two bones was perceived. Various modes of treatment were adopted, but the disease continued its progress; and, about fourteen months before her admission, an abscess pointed and opened in the groin, which still continued to discharge. She was pale, feeble and emaciated. The body was much bent forward, so that she was unable to support herself erect, and could walk but a very short distance without resting her hands upon her knees. The distortion was increasing.—This little girl is now well. She has long discontinued all medical treatment, and for several months has gone *regularly to school*.

Rebecca Banks, aged eleven. March, 1838. Slight projection of two of the lumbar vertebræ, with great pain and tenderness. The body was bowed forward, and she was quite unable to hold herself upright. The disease was evidently progressing, and her health was beginning to give way. The usual treatment was adopted, and in a few weeks she was found to be greatly improved.—She is now perfectly well, and though two of the bones still very slightly project, not the slightest distortion can be perceived when she is dressed. *She is become a strong, stout, and healthy girl.*

Ann Spinks, aged seven. February, 1838. Disease and distortion of the dorsal vertebræ. The curvature was very angular, the body much bent, and thrown also on one side; on that side she complained of great pain. She had loss of power from the loins downwards, but not entire loss of motion. She could not, however, sit, stand, or walk. She had been seen by several surgeons, and was once taken to — hospital, but not admitted as an in-patient. An embrocation was given wherewith to rub the back, but which of course did no good. Her mother is a poor widow, who gets her living by hawking fruit, fish, &c., and it was a case which made one deeply regret the want of an hospital or infirmary; for being left by the mother for many hours every day, with two or three other little children, it was quite impossible that the treatment could be effectually attended to. December 7th.—Imperfectly as the system had in this case been pursued, it had still been attended with the most beneficial results. The figure, though not straight, was very greatly improved, and she can now stand and walk erect; and, having thus

recovered her locomotive powers, can no longer be kept upon her couch in the necessary absence of her mother. In an asylum much more might have been done for the improvement of her form; and much more for the improvement of her mind, for she is now running the streets in a state of deplorable ignorance, the prelude, perhaps, to one of utter degradation and depravity.

Mary Cox, aged five.—Posterior curvature of the cervical and dorsal vertebrae. Excessive angular projection of four or five of the bones. Had been in very ill health for the last four years; and about two years and a half ago the distortion was first perceived, and it had continued to increase from that time. The head very much bent forward, and the shoulders so high that she appeared to have no neck. The chest greatly narrowed, and the sternum thrown out in a sharp point. She could not hold herself erect, nor walk even a few steps without resting her hands upon her knees. In eating, she knelt in a chair, and supported her head by leaning with her elbows on the table. She was excessively thin, pale, and feeble, and her appetite very irregular. The breathing was extremely short and quick, and she was subject to violent and continual palpitations of the heart, as well as to frequent attacks of inflammation of the lungs. There was no hope of restoring the spine to its natural form. There had evidently been great and long-continued disease, and a considerable part of the curvature was the necessary and irremedial consequence. It was expected, however, that some of the bones might be brought straighter; that the body might be placed more erect, and the health be considerably improved; and these expectations have been realised. This little girl has long been comparatively well. She has been permitted to walk, at first with crutches, and since sometimes without them. She stands perfectly erect, although, as was to be expected, there still remains a considerable curvature. Her shoulders are depressed; her neck is raised above them; her chest is greatly expanded, and her health continues to be very greatly improved.

The ease of Jane Gregorie, of Dogmersfield, was slightly alluded to in the former report. Four years ago she was a poor, helpless, emaciated cripple, bent half double, with an enormous posterior curvature of the dorsal vertebrae. Up to the present time the treatment has been continued, under the benevolent superintendence of Lady St. John Mildmay, and some other ladies. Through their means the mind has received instruction as the body has been improving in health and in form; and now, strong, robust, upright, she is about to earn her own living by assisting the governess of an infant or national school.

Such are the cases which are continually offering themselves to our notice; and results such as the above we are frequently the fortunate means of producing, as in the cases of Richard Keeble, Stephen Boughton, Charlotte Crabbe, Mary Reed, Sarah Ann Mills, Louisa Barnes, Louisa Moore, &c. &c. In several of these cases some modes of treatment had ineffectually been adopted, either in hospitals or dispensaries, or by private practitioners. In others little had been done, excepting, perhaps, the simple consultation of some medical person who had either dismissed the case as incurable, or had prescribed the usual impracticable remedies—GOOD HEALTH and SEA AIR; the first impracticable, inasmuch as it is impossible to obtain it while disease and deformity are suffered to proceed unchecked; and the second, in consequence of the inability of poor parents to bear the necessary expense. If, however, such cases are less extraordinary than many others that we have to record, they are not on that account in reality less important. In some of these the malady has been arrested in its progress before the form had become considerably and irretrievably distorted; in all, the bent body has been rendered erect, the curvature in some considerable degree diminished, the existing disease, if any, cured, and the patient protected from a further extension of the malady, an evil of frequent occurrence when the weight of the head and shoulders is permitted to rest upon bones as yet imperfectly consolidated. But there are cases in which results far more extraordinary have been produced, and a few of these we seem to be especially called upon to lay before the Society.

DISEASE OF THE SPINE WITHOUT CURVATURE.

Perhaps there are no cases of which the surgeon has a better right to be proud than of those of diseased spine that terminate without posterior curvature. It is, however, satisfactory to state, that in every case where the treatment has been adopted in a sufficiently early stage, it has been eminently successful. The case of Eliza Viekars was mentioned in the former report. She had after that a relapse, in consequence, perhaps,

of having got about too soon. She was obliged to return to her position, in which she persevered during the trial of a variety of other remedies. The consequence has been the restoration of her powers of moving and sitting, and the removal of all pain and tenderness, without the slightest distortion of the spinal column.

Martha Louisa Garratt's was a case of incipient spinal disease with slight curvature. She was only two years of age, and the complaint had existed and been increasing for four or five months. The chest also was much contracted, the abdomen swollen, and the wrists and ankles much enlarged. There was tenderness of the slightly projecting bones. She was thin, feeble, unable to walk, and had great shortness of breath.—A few months of repose in the PRONE POSITION, with some remedies directed to the improvement of the general health, entirely arrested the progress of the disease, and obliterated every appearance of curvature.

The case of John Tarrant, alluded to in the former Report, has also ended without curvature; and the paralysis with which it was attended is entirely removed; but so attached is he to his prone couch, that although he has long ceased to be considered a patient he cannot be persuaded at night to exchange it for a bed.

Eliza Mead, aged eleven years.—Disease of the dorsal vertebrae. Three or four bones exceedingly tender and painful, and two of them somewhat protruded. She could not stand upright nor walk but with great difficulty. The spine also had acquired a considerable lateral curve, so that the body, when standing, fell much to one side. She had long been under medical treatment, and had for the last seven months been lying constantly on her back, but was weaker and the back more painful than when she began that system. She was pale, thin, and the appetite very bad. September 10.—The tenderness of the spine nearly gone, and the pain greatly diminished. The health also considerably improved. Some slight extension with gentle friction was now employed, in the hope of removing what remained of curvature.—This case steadily progressed towards a cure, and she has long been well, perfectly erect, capable of walking considerable distances, and the spine quite free from either posterior or lateral deformity.

We may also mention here the case of Frances Morley. A diseased state of the dorsal bones, with great pain and tenderness, was rapidly producing a considerable curvature. Fortunately she attracted the attention of the Countess of Sheffield, who was solicited to give her admission to the Sussex County Hospital, but who placed her instead, under the charge of the Society, and benevolently watched the progress of the case.—In six months all appearance of disease has disappeared, and the curvature, arrested in its early progress, is too inconsiderable to have any effect upon her figure. Her general health has in the meanwhile been completely re-established.

DISEASE OF THE SPINE WITH POSTERIOR CURVATURE.

Some of the cases have been mentioned above as those of the most common occurrence; cases in which it has been impossible to perform a perfect cure, but in which the system pursued has been productive of the most beneficial results. A few cases of extraordinary interest we must record here.

John Wilcox, aged eleven years, was seen by Dr. Verral, at Crakehall, in Yorkshire, on the 22d of July, 1838, and under his direction Mr. Spence, a respectable surgeon at Bedale, kindly undertook the superintendence of the case. He had then an immense posterior curvature of the cervical and dorsal vertebrae, with some lateral curvature of the lower dorsal and the lumbar bones. The body was in consequence much lowered and considerably twisted towards the right side. The chest was frightfully contracted and distorted, being pushed out into a sharp peak. He had much consequent difficulty of breathing, great palpitation of the heart, and was so weak as to be incapable of standing or walking without support. The following extract of a letter from Mr. Spence will explain the progress of the case:—

“Bedale, Nov. 20, 1839.

“MY DEAR SIR—I promised, when you were in Yorkshire, that I would supply you with a representation of the figure of John Wilcox.

“You will, on the opposite side of this sheet, perceive three figures, presenting different views of the patient (Figs. 1, 2, 3). The first is the attitude of progression, with his small stick in hand; the second is the stationary attitude, which he often adopted with a longer stick when standing. These two positions represent the patient as he was when in the worst condition of his case, immediately preceding the adoption of the PRONE POSITION. The third figure is a representation of the patient *in his*

amended state, or as he *now is*. Wilcox is certainly a shining trophy of what your system can accomplish. He now enjoys much constitutional vigour ; skips on and off his couch, and seems, comparatively speaking, in robust health. The deformity of the chest has much diminished ; the posterior curvature has subsided in a great degree ; and the spinal processes, that were imperceptible, can now be distinctly traced. The lateral curvature has almost entirely subsided, and he would, as to the *erect* figure, pass satisfactorily the test of a drill-sergeant."

The case of Ann Newman, aged eleven, 10, Fulwood's Rents, Holborn, especially deserves attention ; indeed is one of those that would repay the benevolent for the trouble of a visit, by the gratification that it would afford them to hear the grateful tale of the mother and child, for the very great relief they have experienced from so much misery. Her history is as follows :—In July, 1834, her father, who is since dead, upon examining her back, for a complaint she made of pain in that part whenever she was touched, or stooped, or turned in bed, thought he discovered one of the bones very slightly projecting, and being alarmed, took her to Sir Astley Cooper, who said it was weakness of the spine, and ordered her, sea air, a generous diet, and the use of a back board. The advice was followed, except the visit to the sea side, which the parents' circumstances would not allow of. Three months after this she began to stoop, and was then taken to the _____ Dispensary, where she was merely ordered to be kept lying upon the back. This advice was strictly acted up to for six months, during which time she gradually got worse and worse, both as regards the pain and the deformity. She was then taken to another eminent surgeon, who told the mother, *that it was quite useless to attempt to do anything for her beyond attending to the general health*, and that she might do as she pleased, as he was quite sure no relief could be afforded to her. So advised, the poor widow was left to act according to her own judgment, and she, therefore, seeing that her child could only walk by supporting herself by the hands upon the knees, procured crutches, which were used for about twelve months, until indeed, the child became so weak that she could not walk even with them. So great was the pain that she constantly suffered, that she could not turn in bed without assistance, and even then it caused such extreme agony, that the mother states she dreaded to touch her, as her screams were heart-rending, not only to herself, but also to her neighbours. In this state of misery she continued for upwards of two years, the projection of the spine all the time getting worse and worse, and the chest becoming more and more deformed. Frequently indeed, her sufferings were greater than have been described, for the pain, which was always great, occasionally increased in paroxysms that continued for periods, varying from two days to as much as a fortnight, during which times it was so acute that she could not bear to be in bed, but of her own accord, was accustomed to seek relief by laying on her stomach over a chair, in which position she used to continue night and day until the paroxysm was over, that being the only thing that afforded her the slightest relief. After the paroxysm had subsided, she used to return to her bed, but even in the most perfect intervals she was never free from pain. Her face, as might be expected, was expressive of the greatest care and misery. Her chest had grown out so much, that it resembled a cone, projecting at the apex at least two inches. Such was her condition when she came under the care of the Society, in August, 1839.—Her amendment was rapid, and most marked ; the pain gradually abated, so that in about three weeks it had subsided altogether, and from that time to the present, has never returned. The back became stronger, allowing applications to be made to it ; and now, has improved so much, that she can bear as much pressure as a person in health, without complaining of the least pain or inconvenience. Her general health has undergone a complete change for the better ; and her face has lost all that haggard expression of misery that previously so characterised it. And, lastly, she can walk, nay even run, without support of any kind, or experiencing the slightest inconvenience.

Maria Atkins, aged six and a half years. This was a most deplorable case of disease, distortion, and extreme debility, and was placed under our charge on the nomination of HER MAJESTY QUEEN ADELAIDE. She had an enormous projection of the dorsal vertebrae, partly of a rounded form and partly angular, together with great deformity and contraction of the chest and of all the ribs. She was perfectly incapable of holding herself erect. In attempting, indeed, to stand without support, the body became absolutely bent double. There was great tenderness and pain in the back, especially on moving, and she had also much pain in the chest and abdomen, with shortness of

*John Wilcox,
July 22. 1838.*



• 2



3



*J. C.
Aug. 23. 1838.*



4



5

*J. C.
Nov. 29. 1838.*



*Frederick Goodall
Sep. 15. 1838.*

6



7



8

*F. Goodall.
Nov. 30. 1838.*

*John Wilcox,
Oct. 30. 1838.*

breath and violent palpitations. She was excessively emaciated, the countenance expressive of great suffering, and extremely pale, excepting when flushed by fever, which recurred violently every evening, and was succeeded by profuse night sweats. Her nights were almost sleepless, and her debility so great that she could not walk a step without being supported by two persons, one taking hold of either arm. Such was the state of the child when the treatment began, and for some weeks afterwards she continued so ill as to afford scarcely a hope of recovery. By slow degrees, however, her health, and her form also, began to improve. The pains and the tenderness in a few months were completely removed, and with them the fever and perspirations. She is now erect, and she is able to walk about entirely without support.

John White, aged twelve. This was a case of a very peculiar character. There had long existed, and there still remained, an active state of disease in the upper dorsal and lower cervical vertebræ, accompanied by great pain, excessive tenderness, and an utter inability to support the weight of the head. There was posterior curvature, and probably ankylosis of some of the bones. The projection formed almost a right angle, so that the head was thrown forward upon the chest, and the consequent pressure on the windpipe caused the most distressing oppression and shortness of breath. He could only stand alone or walk by fixing his elbows on his hips, and grasping the chin and face with both his hands. But his most usual position, *when not lying down, was that of standing with his hands resting on his knees and his chin on a table.* In that posture he would sometimes stand for hours, for he sat with much difficulty, and could not even lie down without pain ; indeed he could not lie on his back at all, the pressure on the back of the head appearing to hurt the diseased bones. The chest was much narrowed and thrown forward ; the distortion of the spine had indeed been much greater than at this time, the whole of the dorsal bones having been somewhat curved ; but about twelve or fourteen months ago that general curvature began to disappear, and the chest to become prominent in a corresponding degree. He had been seen by several surgeons, who only recommended exercise and good living ; the former more productive of evil than the latter could be of good. There was some difficulty in placing this patient in a favourable position, but by some modification of the usual plan that object was effected, and he lay *for five months in a position that afforded him perfect ease, and that tended rapidly to effect a cure.* At the end of that time he had become so strong and well that he could no longer be kept at rest, and although he ran about, and even went daily to school, much sooner than he ought in prudence to have done, he has recovered, and was thus snatched from a state of misery.

DISEASE OF THE SPINE, WITH ABSCESS.

The following cases will show, not merely the benefits conferred by the Society, and the advantages of the treatment pursued under its auspices, but that there are few states of disease so desperate as to exclude all hope of cure. Yet these are cases which the profession has too generally given up in despair ; and a common opinion in consequence exists, that disease of the spine, connected with abscess, is never, or very rarely, cured. They will show, too, that there is no reason why, because there may be abscess connected with caries of the bones, some considerable improvement of the form may not be attempted and expected, through the means of a cautious and judicious mode of treatment.

Frederick Goodall, aged twelve, had, when very young, a kick from a horse, which fractured some of the ribs, and beat in the cartilages on the left side :—Sept. 15, 1838. There was a most extraordinary distortion of the chest ; the sternum was pushed forward almost in a point, and the ribs in some places stuck out, and in others fell in, in a most unusual manner. On the left side there was a deep impression, or dell, two inches and a quarter deep, as compared with the surrounding parts. There was a disease of the cervical vertebræ, with an abscess, which had been discharging for more than five months. There was an enormous posterior curvature of these, and of the dorsal vertebræ. He could not stand upright without the support of a stick. He suffered severe pain, and had great shortness of breath, with cough, and great emaciation. He had been for three months at the Margate sea-bathing infirmary, to which place he went in extreme ill health, and whence he had returned in that respect much improved. The figures Nos. 6 and 7 are attempts to represent his state of figure ; but as no plaster of Paris could be procured at West Drayton, a cast unfortunately could not be taken. October 5th—Astonishingly amended ; the back much straighter, and the improvement

in the form of the chest so great as to be almost incredible. The amendment in this case *was so great and so sudden*, that it is deeply to be regretted that a cast was not made ; but it is now too late. The figure No. 8 was taken on November 30th, not quite three months after the treatment commenced. His form after that still further improved. His health and strength became in a few months so much restored, that he went daily to school. The abscess gradually healed, and he has long since ceased to require professional attendance.

Mary Ann Heness, aged five years, had a very considerable curvature of the dorsal vertebræ, with much pain, and extreme tenderness upon pressure. At the same time a large tumour presented itself near the diseased parts. She was pale, feeble, emaciated ; incapable of walking, or sitting erect, and unable to lie supine, owing to the great tenderness of the bones. The abscess was soon after opened, and discharged most profusely, continued to do so for very many months, and brought her to the brink of the grave. She found, however, great comfort in the position in which she was placed, and she would not consent to be moved from it. She lay night and day, and almost motionless, for a year and a half, and towards the end of that time began rapidly to improve. She is now well, perfectly erect. Tonic medicines, with a nutritious diet, doubtless did much for this case ; but the *long and perfect rest, in the most favourable position*, was assuredly the means, not only of improving the form, but also of healing the diseased bones, and of re-establishing the health.

The case of Mary Ann Aiken, of Hastings, is perhaps more extraordinary. This child, aged ten years, had long been suffering from disease of the spine. There was great pain, tenderness, and considerable curvature in two parts of the column ; and when received as a patient, in September, 1837, she had abscesses discharging from three separate orifices. She was excessively weak and ill, and was utterly unable to walk, or even to stand, without support. She improved under the adopted treatment so rapidly, that in two months she became strong enough to walk about ; and in spite of the most urgent remonstrances, was most improperly permitted to do so by an aunt, under whose care she was placed. Fresh mischief was in consequence excited. Inflammation, pain, and tenderness recurred ; the curvatures rapidly increased, and new abscesses formed, while the old ones discharged more profusely. Reduced by all this to the most extreme debility, she was compelled again to resume the use of the prone couch, on which she lay more easily than in any other position. On it she lay unmoved, and apparently in a dying state, for more than eight months. Her recovery was despaired of by all who saw her ; but Dr. Verral acted not upon that despair. He still occasionally visited her, kept her in a favourable position, enforced the necessity of absolute rest, administered steel and other tonic remedies, and obtained for her, from the hand of charity, that generous diet of which she stood so much in need. In the spring of 1839 she again began to improve ; but she was once more pulled back by a severe attack of hooping-cough, through the dangers of which she was safely steered by the kind attentions of Dr. Duke. Towards the end of that summer she began to move about, supported by crutches ; but these she has now thrown by, having become strong, stout, and upright.

Similar to these, in their nature and in their results, have been the cases of James Hodgeson, Alexander Lundie, William Fox, Henry Parrot, &c. &c. Lundie, especially, has, from a poor, feeble, deformed cripple, become a fine, stout, healthy, and upright lad, showing, when dressed, no appearance of distortion ; and William Fox, in addition to spinal disease, had disease also of the hip, from which he has recovered without lameness as he has from the other almost without distortion.

DISEASE OF THE SPINE WITH PARALYSIS.

Matthew Eglin, aged fourteen, was sent from Burniston, in Yorkshire, and placed under the immediate care of Dr. Verral. He had had disease of the upper dorsal vertebræ, and had then a very large, sharp, and sudden curvature, with ankylosis or bony union between many of the projecting bones. *He had utter loss of sensation and motion from the middle of the back downwards.* So complete was the absence of feeling, that a short time before he came to London a coal flew from the fire and burnt a hole in his trousers, which he mentioned to his mother when she entered the room, without being conscious that a large and deep burn had also been inflicted on the knee. About a month after the treatment began he felt some degree of returning sensation, and soon after some involuntary motions took place in the limbs. These increased to such a

degree that he was once or twice jerked off his couch, and his legs were in consequence obliged to be tied down. At length some voluntary motions began to be performed, and in that state he returned to his Yorkshire home, where he continued steadily to improve. We deeply regret the termination of his case. At his earnest request he was one day taken by his too indulgent parents to see the winnowing of some corn, and lay for three or four hours in the draught between the open doors of the barn. He was seized with a violent rigor, inflammation of the lungs succeeded, and he died shortly after of rapid consumption. The cure, however, of the paralysis went on to the last; and a day or two previous to his death he was able to walk across his chamber, supported only by his father's arm.

Jane Dobbins, aged nine years, had, when admitted as a patient, diseased spine with posterior curvature, and perfect paralysis of the lower extremities. These had existed for nearly twelve months. She had been several times taken to one of the hospitals for advice. Her mother had been told by two or three medical gentlemen that there was no chance of recovery, and had been desired by a surgeon of great eminence to keep her lying down as much as possible; a feeble and indefinite expression, which, permitting, as it seemed to do, some sitting up, would be productive of no effectual good. A more decisive and energetic treatment was now adopted. Perfect rest, the PRONE POSITION, external stimulants, and after a time frictions and extensions, with alterative and tonic medicines, speedily produced a beneficial change; and she is now, at the end of eleven months, able to get from her couch without assistance, and to walk about with the very slightest support. At the same time the curve has become much diminished, she stands quite erect, and her health has been completely re-established.

George Honeywood's was a case of the most wretched description. At the age of four years he had never been able to sit upright, or to walk at all. He had disease and curvature in two portions of the spine; the whole column, indeed, was so flexible, that on attempting to raise him upright it yielded in all directions, the bones apparently having no firmness, the ligaments no power. He was everywhere weak, weaker than a new born child; but the lower extremities were utterly powerless. He was pale, emaciated, the face wrinkled like that of an old man. The appetite was bad, the digestion imperfect. He was frequently sick; had constant diarrhoea; the breathing was short and laborious. He had been taken to _____'s hospital, and his mother was told that it was a hopeless case, that the use of the legs would never be regained, and that the less medicine he took the better. In three months from the commencement of the treatment he had become amended beyond all calculation. His health and strength were improved, he was able to sit upright, the curvatures had nearly disappeared, his appetite was good, and the digestive processes properly carried on. It soon became difficult to keep him on his couch, from which, in the absence of his parents, he would remove himself, and crawl about the room. He has now been under our treatment for nearly a year, and he continues to improve. With slight assistance he is now able to walk.

Ann Chambers, aged six years, April 9th, 1840, has been suffering for two years under disease of the dorsal vertebræ. Three spinous processes project very considerably and acutely, and are very tender and painful. The body is much bowed forward; her health is bad, she is exceedingly pale and thin, her appetite variable, the digestion imperfect, and the lower extremities paralysed. This child was fortunately situated, her case being watched and her wants attended to by some ladies at Petworth, especially by Mrs. and Miss Wyndham, at whose desire Dr. Verral visited her. She had long been under medical treatment, and had lain for a very considerable time on her back without improvement; but the change of treatment was scarcely carried on for a week before some improvement had evidently taken place. September 3d—She was much improved in every respect; the health better, the spine less tender and quite free from pain, and she could move her legs. October 2d—Still stronger and better, the tenderness quite gone, the countenance strangely improved, the cheeks plump and full of colour, and the body firm and quite fat; she could walk, supported by the side of her couch or a table. December 10th—She this day got from her couch, and walked across the room without assistance or support.

Similar to these are the cases of Sophy Dayner, of James Scott, &c. &c. The latter, a tall, stout young man, had brought on disease and curvature by lifting a too heavy load. His lower limbs were completely paralysed. He was attended by Dr. Verral, in conjunction with Mr. Waddel, of Thirsk, who kindly paid great attention to his case. At the end of a twelvemonth he had improved much in his form, and recovered the use of his limbs.

LATERAL CURVATURE OF THE SPINE.

It is impossible, indeed, at their own homes to give the necessary attendance *in bad cases of lateral curvature*; and finding, as we have done, that without such attendance the system is never, or most rarely, adequately pursued, we have felt ourselves reluctantly compelled to reject many such cases in the present circumstances of the Society.*

We are not, however, without some cases of relief, and some of perfect cure. Charles Cohen's is a case of cure, while that of his sister is one in which a very dreadful degree of deformity was accompanied by great debility, shortness of breath, palpitation, indigestion, &c.; and in which, under a very imperfect adherence to the plan, a great improvement has taken place in the general health, as well as some amendment in the form. The same assistance, under very similar circumstances, has been rendered to James Knight, Thomas Lucas, &c. &c.

The figures No. 4 and 5, in the Plate, describe the improvement that took place in a case of lateral curvature, in the space of three months. Unhappily, the advancement in that case has not been progressive, owing to the great poverty of the widowed mother, to the want of a nourishing and strengthening diet, and of that continual superintendence on the part of the surgeon which these cases imperatively require; together with the employment of those peculiar measures which cannot be satisfactorily followed by the poor at their own homes.

Mary Ann Merriman's is a case of perfect cure; and we mention it in preference to some others, because two talented surgeons had told her that she never could become straight. She had a considerable sigmoid or double curvature. The spine between the shoulders was an inch out of the perpendicular line; the right shoulder, or rather the ribs beneath it, were very considerably enlarged, and the body fell over to that side. She was weak and in ill health, and constantly complained of pain in the back and side. She was ordered into the country, and returned somewhat improved in health, but not amended in figure. She had attracted the attention of some benevolent ladies, who obtained for her the nomination of the Marchioness of Cholmondeley, and who also raised a subscription, by which, after about two months of treatment at her home, she was placed at Camberwell, under Dr. Verral's immediate care. In four months she was discharged, perfectly well.

DISEASE OF THE HIP JOINT.

Perhaps the most extraordinary triumph of the peculiar modes of treatment to which the patients of this Society have generally been subjected, are to be found in several severe cases of diseased hip; and knowing, as we do, how badly such cases usually terminate, even under the most favourable external circumstances, we can but congratulate the Society upon the success which has attended our efforts under its auspices.

Sophia Deighton, of Hastings, aged thirteen.—Disease of the hip, with abscesses, and a very large ulcer, most profusely discharging. The hip was dislocated, and immensely enlarged. Great pain, especially on moving. Pale, weak, and emaciated, and daily getting worse. The attendance began in July, 1837, and she soon began to improve. In the autumn of 1838 she ceased to be considered a patient, having nothing remaining but a slight discharge from a scrofulous gland, not apparently connected with the diseased joint, which was greatly diminished in size, and free from all pain and tenderness. She is now a strong, stout, and healthy girl, and moves about with much freedom, but of course with a shortened limb.

William Brazier, of Hastings, aged eight, November, 1837.—Terrible disease of the hip, with abscesses discharging from several openings. Cannot move from his bed. The slightest motion causes the most intense suffering. He lies and cries night and day with pain. The legs are drawn up and crossed, and the slightest attempt to untwist or extend them is accompanied by the greatest torture. Weak, loss of appetite, complete emaciation, hectic fever, with cold sweats at night. This boy rapidly improved under the treatment. The legs untwisted and were straightened, the pain soon ceased, the appetite improved, the strength increased. He is now well, or very nearly so, can walk about with perfect ease, and the limb is not very much shortened.

* The establishment of the Asylum has removed this difficulty, and it is no longer necessary to reject cases of lateral curvature. Many cases of this disease are now under treatment in the Asylum, with every prospect of the happiest result.

Joseph Drake, aged seven.—This was a most extraordinary instance of disease and of suffering. When first visited, in April, 1839, he was a most wretched, emaciated object, his countenance the very picture of intense and long-continued agony. His hip was greatly enlarged, and so tender that it could not bear the slightest touch or the slightest motion. He was almost incessantly crying, and when moved his screams were terrible. His nights were utterly sleepless, or if, quite exhausted, he now and then dropped into a slumber, in five minutes he awaked again in the greatest torture. His mother, who lay at night by his side, was worn out with incessant watching. The leg was much drawn up towards the chest, and this contraction was daily and hourly, though very slowly, increasing; and it was this constant and irresistible effort that appeared to be the great cause of pain. He had been ill for two years, but for the last eight months had been entirely confined to his bed, and had all that time been suffering as above described. There was great difficulty in placing him on the prone couch, in consequence of the contraction of the limb. By some considerable modification of the position, it was at length imperfectly accomplished. He submitted with much fortitude to the attempt, but could not help screaming from the agony that it caused him. In ten minutes he fell into a deep and quiet sleep. After waiting a short time, his medical attendant left him, with a charge that if he waked in violent pain he should be moved off, but that he should from day to day try to become inured to the position. He was not visited again for a week, and it was then found that *he had never for a moment been off from his couch; that he had never once complained of pain; that he was somewhat restless during the first two nights, but had slept so well afterwards that his mother exclaimed, "We have not had five such blessed nights for more than a twelvemonth."* Local and general measures were now with confidence resorted to, and these, and a state of absolute rest in a position so evidently favourable, were soon productive of the most beneficial results. Even in one week the change in the countenance was most remarkable. From that of a wretched suffering old man, it became that of a happy, contented, smiling child, as indeed he was. The limb soon became straight, and with the pain the tenderness speedily disappeared. In August he was able to move from his couch, and walk about on crutches. It was soon found, however, that an abscess was presenting itself in the front of the thigh. This was after a time opened, and as it was no longer connected with disease of the bones, it very shortly healed. He has become well.

Edward Luff, aged four years and a half, April, 1839.—This child, who was attended on the nomination of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, has been suffering for nearly two years with hip disease. He evidently showed signs of a scrofulous habit. The joint is greatly enlarged, and excessively painful and tender. The limb much and, as it would seem, permanently bent; yet it does not appear that there is at present dislocation of the joint. His general health is bad; the abdomen very large; great loss of appetite; frequent diarrhœa. Here, again, there was much difficulty in placing him in a favourable position; but that accomplished, he soon became more free from pain, and the part less tender. The leg also became straight, and the general health improved. In a few months he was able to walk on crutches; but after that time an abscess, which had long made its appearance, was opened. This, however, soon healed, and he is now well; the hip reduced so much in size as to match very nearly the other; and the limb not at all shortened.

The cases of Julia Smith and Ann Price are merely counterparts to the above; that of the latter especially, being one almost equal in suffering to that of Joseph Drake. William Fox has recovered from the hip, as from the spinal disease, without lameness, and without distortion.

RULES AND REGULATIONS
TO BE STRICTLY OBSERVED BY THE
INMATES OF THE ASYLUM
ANNEXED TO
THE VERRAL CHARITABLE SOCIETY,
FOR THE TREATMENT OF DISTORTIONS OF THE SPINE, CHEST, AND HIPS.

It is hoped that all the Patients in the Asylum will unite in their endeavours to observe and keep the following Rules, which have been drawn up for their guidance and to ensure the regularity of the ESTABLISHMENT. Every kindness and indulgence, which is compatible with good order, will be afforded to those Patients whose good conduct merits it, but those who wilfully disregard and break the Rules here laid down, will, to prevent their bad example rendering others negligent, be immediately **EXPELLED.**

PRAYERS ..	Will be read in each Ward every Morning before Eight o'clock, when each Patient is expected to attend thoroughly washed and neatly dressed to join in them.
Eight o'clock BREAKFAST	Will be taken to the different Wards, by the Servants of the Establishment, and must be eaten by the Patients whilst lying on their Couches. The Patients are requested to ask for as much Food at all their Meals as they may wish for, but are to leave no Pieces.
Nine o'clock ..	The Boys of each Ward will go to the Exercising Room, and remain there Half-an-Hour, then to be succeeded by others in their turns till Ten o'clock. Whilst the Male Patients are at their Exercises, the Females will repeat their Texts, Spelling, &c. to the Matron.
Ten o'clock ..	The Girls of each Ward will go to the Exercising Room in succession, each party to remain actively employed for Half-an-Hour till Eleven o'clock. Whilst the Female Patients are in the Exercising Room, the Boys will repeat their Texts, Spelling, &c. to the Matron.
Eleven o'clock	The Female Patients are on no account to leave their Wards during the time the Boys are at their Exercises, nor until they shall be summoned by the Matron, after the latter have returned to their Wards.
One o'clock DINNER	<i>All conversation or recognition between the Male and Female Patients, when they shall at any time accidentally meet in the Asylum, is strictly forbidden; and any Patient attempting to infringe this Rule will be IMMEDIATELY EXPELLED.</i>
Two o'clock ..	The Asylum will be inspected by the Medical Officers, and the necessary Frightions, and other processes, will be proceeded with, until One o'clock.
Three o'clock ..	Dinner will be taken to the Patients in their respective Wards, and must be eaten by them on their Couches, observing the same Rules as at Breakfast.
5 o'clock, TEA $\frac{1}{2}$ p.7 SUPPER	The Boys will go to the Exercising Room in the same order and for the same time as in the Morning. The Females in the mean time Reading, (writing or doing a sum on alternate days) under the superintendence of the Matron.
Eight o'clock, PRAYERS ..	The Female Patients will succeed the Boys in the Exercising Room, as in the Morning, whilst the latter, Read, (write and do a sum on alternate days) under the Matron's superintendence.

Patients are not to quit their Couches, except for Exercises, or for necessary purposes, at any time during the day, without Mr. COLES's permission.

Patients are not to sit or stand about in the Wards, to stand looking out of the windows, nor to open the windows.

Patients are not allowed to go out of the Asylum without leave, which leave will be granted with great reluctance, in consequence of its tending to retard their cure. They will not be permitted to sleep out of the Asylum One Night during their residence, on any account whatever.

Patients may be visited by their Friends, between the hours of Two and Four, every day except Fridays.

EXTRACT FROM A PAPER
ON THE
ADVANTAGE AND APPLICABILITY
OF THE

PRONE POSITION

IN
DISEASES AND INJURIES OF THE SPINE,

Malformation of the Chest, Hips, &c.

READ AT THE WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY, MAY 21, 1836,

BY CHARLES VERRAL, Esq.

ON THE
ADVANTAGE AND APPLICABILITY
 OF THE
PRONE POSITION,
 &c.

"It is now six years since I was honoured by the presentation of a MEDAL from the SOCIETY OF ARTS, MANUFACTURES, AND COMMERCE, for the invention of a Prone Couch. Armed with six years of additional experience ,during which several important cases have presented themselves to my view, I have resolved, through the medium of this respectable Society, of which I esteem it an honour to be a member, to call the attention of the public to a POSITION which more than any other contributes to the relief and cure of some of the most terrible diseases, accidents, and deformities that flesh is heir to. When I first invented the simple board which I shall presently have the pleasure of showing you, I little expected to produce the important results which I have now to communicate ; and now that these results have been realised, although based upon the production of that simple board, I no longer am content to be considered as the mere inventor of a couch, it being my prouder boast that I have been the discoverer of a NEW AND MOST ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION ; one which I believe to have been hitherto untried and unthought of ; and one which will ultimately, in a great variety of cases, supersede its opposite, the supine position, in which patients have hitherto most usually been laid.

"A young lady whom I have recently had under my care, who had DISEASE OF THE HIP, and LATERAL DISTORTION OF THE SPINE, lay on one occasion for ten days and nights without being moved, 'a consummation devoutly to be wished,' as the very slightest motion occasioned her the most excruciating pain. This patient lay on the couch for more than sixteen months, and never expressed the slightest wish for any change of position. When the matter which had formed in the joint had opened itself externally, she was obliged once a day to be removed from the couch, that the part might be washed and the soiled linen changed ; this however was a process so easily effected, that she scarcely made any complaint about it, although, certainly, previous to the opening of the abscess, it had not been performed without much pain. This patient has quite recovered, excepting that, as the hip joint *had become dislocated*, the limb is of course shortened.

"A case considerably analogous to this, is that of a poor little girl who had abscess of the hip, and consequent dislocation. She had, in addition to the above, a considerable LATERAL CURVATURE OF THE SPINE. There was continual spasm of the muscles of the legs, and the left leg was drawn and had become fixed so tightly over the other that it was almost impossible to separate them. She suffered also very great pain upon the slightest degree of motion. Her father was shepherd upon a farm belonging to Davies Gilbert, Esq., the late president of the Royal Society, whose lady had requested my attendance, and who watched the progress of the case. I cannot describe the result more emphatically than she has done in a letter to a friend of mine, by whom I am

permitted to extract the following passage :—‘ It is but a few weeks ago that the poor child’s legs were contracted in the most frightful manner, and she then suffered so much pain upon the slightest motion, that when it was necessary to lift her from her bed, she was frequently thrown into convulsions ; and now, owing to Mr. Verral’s treatment, so rapid a change has taken place, that last Sunday she was enabled, by the help of her crutches, to walk to church, a distance of a quarter of a mile.’

“ In the two cases I have just related, as well as in the one I am about to relate, I have not merely to boast that the patients recovered in the PRONE POSITION ; my boast is, that but for the PRONE POSITION, they would not have recovered so soon, so easily, or so perfectly ; for in the SUPINE POSITION, the only other advantageous one, they were absolutely unable to lie. The following history, which is that of the second patient whom I placed upon the couch, will exemplify the difficulty and the mischief of attempting to force these patients to lie in the usual manner.—Ann Martin, a poor girl, aged fifteen, had a very considerable posterior curvature of the dorsal vertebrae. The legs were partly paralysed, or I should perhaps rather say, rendered useless by contraction, which had drawn the one across the other very firmly, and had rendered her incapable of straightening the knees. I directed her to lie on a mattress in the SUPINE POSITION ; but the attempt gave her great pain, both in the back and legs, and produced violent cramp, which still more firmly drew up the legs, and fixed them more tightly across. The consequence was that at night, when the superintendence of the mother necessarily ceased, she always got on her side, and lay coiled up in the worst possible position. Upon this I resolved to place her on the PRONE COUCH, and upon that she was able to lie with perfect ease ; the legs soon became relaxed and capable of the wonted voluntary motions ; the back gradually became straight, and after a few months she was dismissed well. The termination of this case was not so favourable as I could have wished. The girl went to service, probably too soon — probably in too laborious a situation. In three years she again applied to me ; the spine had given way, and a large abscess had formed in the neighbourhood. I placed her again upon the couch, and opened the abscess. She seemed to be going on well, when, by one of those changes so frequently occurring, in rural districts especially, so derogatory to the profession and detrimental to the poor patients themselves, the attendance of the paupers of that parish passed out of my hands into those of another medical person, who, in utter ignorance of my plans and of my motives, in utter ignorance of the former history of the case, abruptly dismissed the couch, placed her in bed, in which I heard also she was allowed to lie pretty much as she liked ; and though she ultimately recovered her health, she was left with a considerable degree of deformity.

“ But amongst the greatest triumphs of the PRONE POSITION I must call your attention to two cases. The first is that of a poor little girl, aged about four years, the child of parents in the lowest state of poverty ; the father having for many years laboured under a painful and apparently incurable disease, though he had become the progenitor of nearly a dozen children. I mention this to account in some measure for that negligence on the part of the parents which allowed a disease of so much importance to proceed so far, without having consulted any medical person on the subject. When I saw the child I found a posterior curvature of the dorsal vertebrae, terminating upwards in an acute angle, from whence the cervical vertebrae advanced suddenly forwards, so that the neck seemed to be completely buried and lost, and the head to rest absolutely on the shoulders. There was paralysis of the lower extremities, excessive emaciation, a tense and tumified abdomen, great contraction of the chest, cough, dyspnœa, palpitation of the heart, depraved appetite, extreme debility, and fever, apparently of a hectic character. This child was placed upon the couch about a year since, and a very considerable improvement was speedily perceived, not only in the shape of the spinal column, but also in her general health ; which improvement has progressively advanced up to the present time, although the want of sound and sufficient nutriment, as well as of care and cleanliness, evils incidental to the poverty and the large young family of the parents, have rendered this one of the most unfavourable cases I have ever had to attend to. My other patient was more fortunate ; for though the daughter also of poor parents, she resided in the vicinity of Firle Place, the seat of Lord Gage, to whom, and to Lady Gage, the child has been indebted for the nourishment which at one time was considered indispensably necessary for her support. This case I did not see until it had existed a very long time. There had been disease of the bodies of several of the lumbar and dorsal vertebrae ; abscess had formed ; matter, together with portions of bone, had made its way out at the groins, and through two or three openings in each of the thighs. She had been long under the care of the parish surgeon, who, apparently despairing of the case, had not recently thought it necessary to pursue any particular medical treatment. In

spite, however, of all these unfavourable circumstances, her parents had fancied that about two or three weeks before I saw her an evident change for the better had taken place in her health. The distortion, however, still continued to increase; and, to use the expression of her mother, she grew shorter and shorter every day. I found her creeping about, though with much difficulty, supported upon one crutch, and that a great deal too short. She was exceedingly emaciated; the body was bowed forward so as to approach to a semicircle; — the countenance had assumed the appearance of old age; and she was not, at eleven years, equal in height to many a child of five or six. On examination, I found an immense protuberance on the middle of the back, forming at its apex a very acute angle, at least four inches without the natural line of the spinal column. In consequence, however, of the bowing forward of the head and shoulders, the whole spine seemed to be one vast lump of distortion, with this angular protuberance growing out of its centre. There was also considerable lateral distortion, the consequence, probably, in great part, of her being allowed to depend upon a single crutch; and the ribs had been drawn back by the distorted spine, and were involved in, or indeed formed part of, the general deformity behind, while in front they, and even the sternum, were so sunk in, that they were almost buried from the view. This child was placed in the PRONE POSITION on the 28th of March, 1835, and from it she never had been moved, excepting that for the last two months I had permitted her to stand sometimes for an hour, supported by two crutches so long that her feet could but just touch the ground. The progress of amendment had been very satisfactory. The discharge soon abated, and had long since entirely ceased. The wounds were completely healed. The health had greatly improved. At the end of three months she had increased in height above an inch, and she grew more than two inches taller than when she first assumed the position. The lateral curvature speedily disappeared altogether; and the spine, which, as I have said, was at first bent like a bow, began soon to approach to a straighter form. To facilitate this process, I was enabled, at the end of about three months, to place a sloping board upon the upper part of the couch, which, by raising the shoulders and neck, had fully answered my expectations. The natural hollowing of the back was even considerably restored, and the tumour itself was diminished in size, although it could not be possible to obliterate the angular protuberance produced by the ankylosed bones. The little girl, however, can now stand perfectly upright; the distortion of the chest is almost completely remedied, the general health is become perfectly good, and the countenance has assumed its naturally healthy and youthful character.

"The use of the PRONE POSITION has, in both these patients, been attended by the most important advantages. In the first place, *they could not have lain supine*, especially the latter, in consequence of the rounded state of the back; but if they had been forced by any contrivance into that position, so sharp in both cases was the angle formed by the protruding bones, that the pressure would in a few days, and perhaps in a few hours, have wrung and excoriated the parts. Against this painful and ultimately destructive excoriation, no contrivance has been devised which must not, as regards the cure of the distortions themselves, be completely inoperative, if not positively injurious. Take the hydrostatic bed, for instance. Had the latter child been placed supinely upon it, is it not evident that the angular tumour would only have been preserved from the effects of pressure by the displacement of the water, and the formation of a bed for itself, in which to lie with ease? In like manner would the curved spine have sunk into a cavity of its own shape and size, in which case the position could have had no tendency towards the correction of the deformity, but, on the contrary, would, I think, have had somewhat of an injurious effect.

"For the various contractions and distortions of the CHEST, it has been usual to place the patient on the back. In these cases, however, the PRONE POSITION is so immediately and effectually operative, that it ought, I venture to assert, to be at once and universally adopted. A young lady, aged about ten years, was constantly affected with most violent and alarming fits of asthma. These had been many times repeated before it was discovered that the chest was considerably distorted. Upon its being shown to me, I found it in front so strangely contracted and deformed, that I immediately advised a trial of the couch. We used in this case nothing but the simple platform with the angle; and this board being placed on the sofa, she used to lie on it for four or five hours in the day while she was learning her lessons. In a very few months she was enabled to lay it aside, the chest having become perfectly well formed, *and the asthma having entirely ceased*.

"In conclusion, I beg leave to repeat my perfect conviction that the PRONE POSITION will enable us to cure many cases of disease which would without it be incapable of being cured; and that even where it cannot altogether cure, it will afford

such a chance of improvement, and such a certainty of relief, as to establish its vast superiority over every other plan of treatment. To restore health to the diseased body, and beauty to the distorted form, are the proudest boasts of our art; and second only to these is its power of alleviating the pangs of sickness, and of smoothing the passage to the grave."

The above, with a few necessary alterations, was the paper in which I first promulgated my opinions and experience in favour of the PRONE POSITION. In that paper I boast that I have been, not merely the inventor of a new couch, but the discoverer of a new and more advantageous position. Four years of great additional experience have confirmed all my prepossessions in favour of a system of treatment of which the PRONE POSITION forms a most essential part, and from which the most fortunate results may almost uniformly be expected. It is natural, perhaps it is proper, that a new system should be cautiously, if not jealously, received; and I am not disappointed that mine should not be found amongst the exceptions to the rule; that it has not been followed with the eager haste with which a large part of the public ran after the empiricisms of Hahnemann, or the visions of Mesmer. It is enough that a large experience has placed the utility of my plans of treatment upon an incontrovertible basis; and I refer with some pride to the cases described, believing them to afford an evidence of success such as few other practitioners have been enabled to produce.

DISEASE OF THE SPINAL CHORD AND COLUMN.

Miss E. V., aged twenty-one, had been long suffering from great pain in the back, accompanied by exquisite tenderness. Pain also in the limbs and in the chest, together with constant, and sometimes most distressing, shortness of breath, and an utter inability of walking, and almost of moving from her bed. The digestive, and indeed all the functions, were very imperfectly performed. On examination, I found a lateral curvature between the shoulders, and a considerable enlargement of the ribs on the right side. The tenderness was very great, but it struck me that it was too diffused, and perhaps too acute, to be attributed to diseased bone. She began the use of the couch on the 24th of January, 1837; but owing to the extraordinary pain that she suffered, was able at first to lie on it but for a short time—not above three or four hours in the day. Gradually, however, increasing the time, she was able, at the end of about three months, to continue upon it night and day. Previous to this a circumstance occurred which entirely confirmed my opinion that there was no disease of the bones. The tenderness which had so long been felt in the course of the spine became somewhat relieved, and at the same time attacked the whole edge of the right scapula, which became so acutely sensible that the slightest touch occasioned severe torture. She persevered for more than a year. The appetite soon improved, and all the functions were speedily restored to a healthy state. She is now perfectly well.

I was consulted, about two years ago, by a lady of high rank, who had been recommended to try the PRONE POSITION, and who had indeed been supplied a few months before, by a surgeon who then attended her, with a couch, which, *while it pretended to be mine, was in every respect unlike it*; a circumstance the more unpardonable, because I had once caused a couch to be made for that gentleman, that he might try it on a hospital patient who was under his care. This lady has suffered for many years from spinal irritation. There was great derangement of the digestive organs, accompanied by spasms and intense pain. But she had also long complained of great pain and extreme tenderness in parts of the spinal column, and of a distressing sense of dislocation. I found, on examination, that two of the lumbar vertebrae had become in the very slightest degree more prominent than the others, the effect, no doubt, of a relaxation of the ligaments, occasioned, in part, by great and long-continued debility, and in part by the half-sitting and half-lying position to which she had long been accustomed, both on her sofa and on her bed. I found also an extreme tenderness of some parts of the spine; but I felt assured, as do indeed the physicians who at present attend her, that it was not the tenderness of disease of the bones, which I fully believe she has never had, although she has, by some of the medical persons whom she has consulted, been treated, I may say tormented, for it, especially by repeated burnings with moxa.

Miss S., aged twenty, consulted me in March 1831. She had been suffering for several months with pain and extreme tenderness of the vertebrae of the loins. It had rapidly increased; and when I saw her she was almost incapable of moving, and even of sitting for any time. There was also a considerable lateral twist of the same bones,

so that, when attempting to stand, the left hip was frightfully projected. A few months of perseverance in the PRONE POSITION, together with the use of slight counter-irritants, and of a course of alterative and tonic remedies, improved both her health and her form. She is now well, and has long ceased to require my attendance.

POSTERIOR CURVATURE.

Several cases of cure by the treatment I recommend have been recorded in the Report. Two of a somewhat extraordinary character will be mentioned here, and this is especially done because it has been supposed that the PRONE POSITION was not well calculated for disease in the vertebræ of the neck.

Miss C—— M——, aged three and a half years, had disease of the cervical vertebræ, which had yielded under the weight of the head, so that when erect the head seemed absolutely to rest upon the shoulders as if there were no neck. There was very great tenderness upon pressure, and great pain in motion, so that she could not bend or turn the head in any direction. She was evidently of a scrofulous habit, having at the same time considerable swelling of several of the glands and thickening of the upper lip. There was much difficulty in placing her in a favourable position; but it was effected, and the greatest benefit was speedily derived from it. The treatment was begun on the 13th of February, 1840. During the first month even an evident improvement took place; the tenderness was lessened, and there was less pain on motion; and before the end of May the disease and distortion had almost entirely disappeared.

Alfred Coxon, aged two and a half years, had for several months been afflicted with disease of the vertebræ of the neck. When first visited, on the 28th of July, 1839, he was in a state of extreme suffering. The tenderness was most acute, and the very slightest motion made him scream with agony. The head was thrown forcibly backwards, and was obliged to be supported in that position, as the least tendency to drop forward gave him extreme pain. The neck appeared to be entirely lost. He had long been unable to lie on his back, and indeed in no position could he lie without continual suffering. There was very great difficulty in arranging the couch so as to place him in an easy and advantageous position, but that being once attained, he lay on it for a whole week literally motionless. At the end of that time I assisted in moving him. This task was at first performed with the utmost difficulty, and was repeated only once a week for nearly two months, at which time some evident improvement had taken place, and my assistance in moving him became no longer necessary. His health, too, which had been much affected, became better; his appetite improved, and the lower extremities, which had been utterly powerless, began to recover their wonted strength. In less than six months he began to move about, and it was then almost impossible to keep him quiet on his couch. He has recovered with the slightest possible projection of one or two of the bones. When I contrast these cases with three others in which I have been consulted,—cases which, treated in the usual manner, had advanced too far to admit the hope of cure, although in all of them the change of position afforded great relief; cases, too, where circumstances had allowed them to have the first advice, and every possible attention to their wants and comforts,—when with those cases, which ended fatally, I contrast the two above narrated, I am more than ever impressed with the infinite advantage of the PRONE POSITION.

I may here briefly advert to the case of Master W., aged two years and a quarter, the only child of a gentleman who benevolently contributes to the funds of our Society, and who lost his eldest son at four years of age with a spinal disease. This case, which was one of disease and distortion of the dorsal vertebræ, had been proceeding unfavourably under the somewhat conflicting opinions of the eminent men who had been consulted. The health had become somewhat improved by a few weeks' residence at the sea side; but the change of position and of treatment, which I deemed it desirable to adopt, produced an immediate improvement in the character and appearance of the diseased parts, and he is now well in health, the bones completely free from disease, and, although not without some angular projection, he is able to support himself even more than usually erect.

In cases of posterior curvature, no longer accompanied by disease, the PRONE POSITION, assisted by some extension, friction, &c. has proved highly beneficial. So numerous are these cases that the difficulty is not that of finding enough to narrate, but of selecting the best and the most extraordinary. For some of these I must refer to the pages of the Report, and must content myself here with making a few brief observa-

tions and explanations. In the first place, I must reprobate all violent attempts by means of pulleys, heavy weights, and forcible compression to straighten parts which, having been diseased, have healed by bony union, and which must therefore continue permanently curved. What a powerful and long-continued pressure may do, by exciting or compelling absorption of a projecting *spinous process*, I cannot tell; but it is, I conceive, certain that it can have no effect on the distorted and united *bodies* of the bones. The notion is surely ridiculous, yet it has not unfrequently been entertained. In the next place, I almost equally condemn all those *spinal supports*, as they are called, which *making the hips their fulcrum, profess by acting on the shoulders, to straighten the crooked spine.* The attempt is futile; even were the object attainable the means would fail; for the shoulders, unattached as they are to the general bony structure, *may be pushed up to the ears without affecting the form of the vertebral column.* But as they *weaken the muscles*, and probably contract the chest, they are not powerless as to evil, though incapable of effecting good.

ABSCESS, &c.

On the subject of **CARIES** and **ABSCESS**, I have nothing to add to what has been said in the Report, excepting to mention a favourable circumstance which has many times occurred in my practice, and which I believe to be mainly attributable to the position employed. When the cure has for some time appeared to be auspiciously progressing, we have occasionally been disappointed by the appearance of an abscess presenting itself usually in the groin or front of the thigh. It has been opened, and instead of continuing to discharge, as is usual, for weeks and months, and sometimes for years, it has spontaneously and speedily closed. It has appeared to me that, formed during the existence of disease, and containing perhaps some offending or decayed matters of which it was necessary to get rid, it slowly but steadily made its way forwards, *favoured by the position of the patient*, leaving behind it healthy and healing parts, and finally closing as soon as it was relieved of its contents. How different would the result have been, if, the patient being placed on his back, the matter had been allowed to lie where it was formed, burrowing amongst the muscles in the neighbourhood of the diseased parts, and thus increasing the evil from whence it originally sprung. If my explanation of an undoubted fact be a correct one, it surely speaks volumes in favour of the position I am advocating. This circumstance has recently occurred in the case of Robert Hudd, a poor boy recommended to the care of the Society by the Lady Eliz. Whitbread. That of Henry Parrot, and in part also that of Wm. Fox, may be given as instances of a similarly favourable termination.

LATERAL CURVATURE.

Of **LATERAL OR TWISTED CURVATURE** of the spine, it is impossible to say all I would wish to say here. The subject would require a volume, and it must be remembered that I am writing an essay, not on the treatment of distorted spine, but on the use of the **PRONE POSITION**. To the general adoption of that position, not to the exclusion of air and exercise, but to the exclusion of standing and sitting, I am, I doubt not, indebted for much of the success which has attended my treatment of these distressing deformities. It materially promoted the cure of very many of my patients, and has enabled me to improve the health, to relieve the sufferings, and to amend the form of many more who, from their age or from the extent of their distortions, could not expect to be perfectly cured.

Miss C. P., a young lady, aged sixteen, had been for ten months employing a variety of exercises, under the direction of a surgeon, who largely employs that method of treatment. She had been especially using the hand swing and heavy dumb bells, but was, notwithstanding, gradually becoming worse. The dumb bells I absolutely forbade at once; the swing I allowed her to continue under some modifications. She had, when she first came under my care, some enlargement of the right shoulder, together with a slight sigmoid flexure of the spine. As the case was not a very bad one, I allowed her to take much exercise in the air; but within doors the use of the couch was enjoined as a constant substitute for the sofa or the chair. In all other respects the usual treatment was adopted, and in four months I had the satisfaction of pronouncing her perfectly well.

Miss M., aged nineteen, had been, when I saw her, in November, 1836, under the direction of a surgeon of great eminence, who had ordered the use of the reclining-board,

as it is called, a thing which, in *lateral curvature*, must be almost powerless. In addition to the board, she was also enjoined to practise some modes of exercise, and to make use of heavy dumb bells. She got, however, worse and worse; and when she was placed under my care, she had a very considerable curvature both towards the right shoulder and the left loin. There was also a very great enlargement of the right shoulder, while the left was very much depressed. The adoption of my plan of treatment was attended with immediate benefit; and although the age of the patient was not so favourable as it would have been a few years earlier for the rapid yielding of the parts, she has become, at the end of seventeen months, as nearly as possible well. This improvement in her form has also been accompanied by a great improvement in her general health, which, before she began the use of the couch, was very far from good.

Miss V., a young lady of the same age as the above, has to congratulate herself upon a more speedy cure. She had been, for fourteen months, pursuing the gymnastic treatment, climbing, and jumping, and swinging, from day to day, but without any good effect. When she began the exercises her spine was an inch out of the perpendicular line at the right shoulder; when she abandoned them it was out an inch and a half. In one month we regained the lost half inch, and in six months she was so well as entirely to dispense with my attendance.

Miss M. F., aged fifteen, had double or sigmoid flexure of the spine, with very considerable enlargement of the ribs under the right shoulder, and depression of those on the left. The spine was an inch and a half out of the perpendicular line between the shoulders. The young lady was healthy and strongly formed, and the case did not yield so rapidly as those of some others at her age. At the end of a twelvemonth's attendance, however, I have the satisfaction to say that the spine had become as nearly as possible straight, while the ribs on both sides were rapidly assuming their natural forms; and this good has been effected while she has been at school, pursuing without interruption all the studies and avocations of a young lady of her station.

I have one or two other cases to give, but, before I do that, it is necessary to state some objections to modes of treatment which have hitherto been adopted. The violent gymnastic exercises, amongst other objections, appear sometimes to overstrain the tendons or ligaments, so as either to increase the distortion, or to cause a tendency to relapse. Steel supports are generally constructed upon a false principle. The hips on which they rest are, it is true, fixed points; but the shoulders, by which they act, are so moveable that they may be raised up to the ears without at all correcting an obstinate curve of the spine, or an established distortion of the ribs. The worst cases of deformity I have ever seen, have been those which have been attempted to be cured by steel stays. Other spine supports which, avoiding this error, trust to the effect of general pressure, have sometimes produced great contraction of the chest, and have induced cough and other consumptive symptoms. Both kinds have one common objection, that of destroying the muscular energy, *by taking from the muscles all necessity for exertion*. The stretching by pulleys, the binding up with shields and compresses, and the placing the patient immovably on the back, is a plan which, though it may in a few cases have produced extraordinary results, is liable to three important objections. It frequently injures the health, overstrains the tendons and ligaments, and produces contraction of the chest, &c.; and at the same time, while the treatment for the slighter cases is most unnecessarily severe, it not unfrequently, in bad ones, fails to effect a cure. Lastly, I object most loudly to what may be called the *let-alone system*. Hundreds of fees are annually earned *by advising patients to run about the sea-side, or to lie for two or three hours a day upon an inclined plane*. Now, running about by the sea-side may be excellent exercise for the straight, but if trusted to as a cure for the crooked, it will generally prove worse than useless; and, as for an inclined plane, its inutility is so obvious that one cannot but wonder that any scientific or observant practitioner should ever have trusted to its use. The lying flat on the back of course, for a time, relieves the spine of its superincumbent weight; but what benefit can be expected from the inclination of the plane? It can give no drag to the spine, unless it can be raised very high, and then the body, of course, would slip down altogether. To prevent this, it is true, some miserable contrivances have been adopted, by which the shoulders are pulled up, or the patient half hung by straps fixed under the chin.

I have at present under my care a young lady, who, in the early stage of a lateral curvature, was benefited by pursuing for a few months a peculiar system of calisthenic exercises; but speedily relapsing, she tried steel stays, by which her shoulders were most awkwardly raised, while the spine gradually became more bent, and the ribs more distorted. At the end of six months, during which she has been under my charge, she has become very nearly well, and the high shoulders have assumed their wonted and proper form.

Miss C——, aged twenty-one, had for seven years and a half been wearing, under the direction of two eminent surgeons, every variety of spine supports. When I saw her in May, 1838, her shoulders were frightfully raised, and her head half buried, and pushed so forward that I expected at first to find an enormous posterior curvature. The case, however, was one of great lateral distortion. The spine was fearfully curved, being three inches and a quarter out of the perpendicular line. The right shoulder was most enormously enlarged, and the ribs on the left side so depressed as to be scarcely perceptible. When out of her stays the body fell completely off its balance. The chest was very much narrowed, and the body so much shortened, that not only were the actions of the heart and of the lungs impeded, but those of the digestive organs also. A perfect cure was in this case not to be expected. In a few months, however, the form became improved; and when I ceased to attend her, in the beginning of 1840, the right shoulder had become much smaller, and both of them so considerably brought down that, the chest also being expanded, the bust in front showed no longer any appearance of deformity. With this the spine had become straighter, she had increased nearly three inches in height, and was able to carry herself so erect that, with some slight modifications of a common pair of stays, she was enabled to take her place in society without inconvenience, and with little visible incorrectness of form.

Miss C., a young lady, also nearly twenty-one, had been for two years under the care of a physician, lately deceased. She had been stretched and bound up in shields, and had lain constantly on her back, until, while the distortion had not yielded, the health and strength had so entirely given way that she was utterly unable to support herself, or to walk a step without the assistance of two persons. The adoption of the PRONE POSITION soon produced a favourable change, although it was very long before the health was re-established. At the end of two years she is able to walk about without support. The form too is much improved, although the change has not been so rapid or so considerable as in the case last mentioned, the constant and long-continued pressure having apparently rendered more permanent the distortions that it had failed to cure, while the extreme debility that had been induced for a long time prevented her from using the necessary exercises and extensions.

Miss A., aged twenty-two, was a similar case, and had been similarly treated. The deformity here, however, had in some measure been corrected, but the health had completely given way, and she had shown some symptoms of dropsy. The adoption of my different mode of treatment in a few months restored both her health and her form.

Of extraordinary improvements in the health as well as the figure I could relate many more instances, but I have not room for them here. I shall content myself with the relation of one more case, *to show the advantage of an early adoption* of some efficient plan of cure, instead of wasting the time either at the sea-side or on an inclined plane. Miss S., aged nineteen, became an inmate of my house at Camberwell, in June, 1840. She had a slight and incipient lateral curvature, of the double or sigmoid character, with a somewhat considerable projection of the right shoulder. The mischief was perceived only a few months before she came under my care. An unremitting attention to the treatment prescribed for her was rewarded in three months by an almost perfect cure. When she left my roof there remained nothing save a very slight difference in the appearance of the shoulders, which was not in the least perceived when dressed; and even this is fading away under the attention that she still pays to my directions. The rules laid down for her permitted, I may say enjoined, a liberal allowance of exercise in the open air, as well as the occasional indulgence of a visit to a friend. In addition to the accustomed exercises and extensions, which occupied an hour or two in each day, she was simply required, *instead of standing or sitting*, to read, work, or otherwise occupy herself upon the prone couch; and her case, among many others, is worthy of record only, by showing that a simple, easy, and in no way irksome process will, perhaps to a certainty, correct that tendency to error which, under neglect or an improper treatment, might degenerate into a fearful and incurable deformity.

Before I close this part of my subject, I must protest against the assumption, that because I advocate the use of the PRONE POSITION, I consider the prone couch to be in itself the only thing needful. I know the parents of a young lady to have complained that she derived no benefit from my system, who never gave a trial to that system any farther than by obtaining a prone couch. I was permitted only once or twice to visit her, and she was then taken off to Rainsgate, "*to run about by the sea*," and to lie, I presume, to rest herself upon the couch, when the already curved spine, overwearied by exercise, had sunk into a greater curve. *No system can be expected to succeed that is thus imperfectly and inadequately pursued.*

HIP-JOINT DISEASE.

The same causes which have been productive of such favourable results in spinal cases, have appeared to operate as fortunately in several cases of diseased hip. I must mention here one case, for the sake of showing our greatest triumph, that of preventing that terrible havoc, the effects of which no human power can effectually remedy. Extraordinary as the sudden relief from anguish, and the unexpected escape from the grave may appear, the nobler boast of our art is that of arresting the enemy in its earliest stage, before it has committed ravages, the cure of which may excite so much surprise.

Miss A., aged twenty, was visited by me on the 30th of January, 1840. She had then been under the care of an eminent hospital surgeon for about four months. But she shall tell her own story, and I will only premise, that when I first saw her, the hip was very much enlarged, was exceedingly tender and painful, not only on moving, but in every position, whether standing, sitting, or lying. Owing to the great, and as it appeared, permanent bend of the limb, there was some difficulty in placing her favourably on the couch: when this was effected, the relief was almost instantaneous. The following is an extract from a letter of hers, dated September 29th, 1840:—"You thought the cause of my disease was the falling from the pony"—that was in July, 1839. "I felt a little pain for about two days, and then took no more notice of it. I again suffered from it in September, and on the beginning of October went to Mr.—. He paid very little attention to the hip until he had strengthened me. I bathed my feet in warm salt and water every night; after a time, applied fomentations of poppies night and morning, but found no relief. He then ordered perpetual blisters, which I tried for two months, but still was a constant sufferer. The limb was so contracted that I could not get my foot to the ground. You came to see me the 30th of January. I had not been on the couch an hour before I felt a little relieved. I kept to it, night and day, for six weeks, and never left it during the day for four months! I then got off for about ten minutes at a time, and so left it gradually. By the end of June I could walk half a mile without fatigue. I am not in the slightest degree lame, and seldom suffer any pain, except from extra fatigue, and then an hour or two on the couch will relieve me." The general treatment adopted here was perhaps not very different from that which had been followed by Mr.—, excepting that the counter-irritation employed was not of so painful and exhausting a character as the perpetual blisters. The great difference lay in the obtaining of **PERFECT REST IN THE BEST POSSIBLE POSITION**. Without that, the treatment at first pursued was unsuccessful; with it, a milder plan was productive, in a very few weeks, of the happiest results.

There are many other cases in which the PRONE POSITION has been found to be eminently advantageous, as in some very bad distortions of the limbs, in malformations of the chest, in some cases of asthma, in injuries of the spine, &c.; but I dare not venture to relate any farther cases, having perhaps already exceeded the limits that can well be allowed me. I cannot, however, conclude this hurried essay without saying that, because I am advocating the use of the PRONE POSITION, it must not be supposed, as it sometimes has been, that the possession of a prone couch is to supersede the attentions of the surgeon. However essential it may be considered, *it forms but a part of the remedial process*; nor is it enough to say that the PRONE POSITION has been tried, because the patient has been placed on it for one or two weeks, or even months. Perhaps under no circumstances could the case have improved much in that time. The constitution of the patient, the nature of the disease, the extent of the mischief may forbid it. The position is not now to be tried as a mere experiment; many years of extensive use, and of extraordinary success, have placed it upon higher grounds. It becomes, therefore, a question for consideration and choice. Three modes of proceeding are offered:—1. To walk and sit about without heeding the question of position at all. 2. To lie supine. 3. To lie prone. Let the question be attentively considered; let the object to be obtained be canvassed along with the proffered means of obtaining it; and then, the choice being made, and the plan properly adopted, *let it be stedfastly persevered in*; for in disease of every kind scarcely anything is so mischievous as a vacillating line of conduct.

CHARLES VERRAL.

WYNDHAM ROAD, CAMBERWELL,
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